

June 5, 2024

Festivals, Parades, & Market Vendor Season

It's that time of year when the weather changes and we start making plans for the summer. This is the best time to ensure that your festivals, parades, and markets are well-planned and the proper preparations have been made for safety of all those involved. The RMA Insurance Risk Advisor team has prepared a checklist for you to go through to ensure that you're ready for this year.

Plan Ahead

A key factor to your successful summer events is having a well-developed plan well in advance. Focus on structure of the leadership team, vendor policies, event security, and insurance needs for the specific event.

Your plans should entail how to handle emergencies, including medical incidents, evacuation protocols, and procedures on how to contact the appropriate authorities.

Staff and Volunteer Training

Ensure that all staff are professionally trained to understand their assigned duties and responsibilities prior to the event. Implement written policies and procedures, as these will provide your event with structure for this event and future events. Install daily staff meetings before the start of your event, which will ensure all are on the same page and provide opportunities for continuous training to ensure your event is successful.

Ensure your staff and vendors work alongside with law enforcement regarding security and safety protocol, procedures, and training from law enforcement on to know under what circumstances to contact security.

When selecting staff and volunteers it is important that they can perform their assigned duties, they are thoroughly trained and supervised. If the individual oversees money handling or is working with minors, seniors, or those with people with disabilities, they should be screened with the appropriate criminal records checks and vulnerable sector checks. Your local police agency can provide vetting of your volunteers, depending on the event and scope of the volunteer's task.

If the individual is operating a vehicle or equipment, they should provide a driver's abstract, carry the appropriate license class and can safely operate the equipment or vehicle.

Finally, it is recommended that all volunteers enter into a volunteer agreement, much like an employment contract. This type of agreement should be drafted by a lawyer and contain information such as the responsibilities and limitations of the volunteer as well as specific information regarding workers compensation, other benefits, honorariums, and any other essential information given the tasks they are to perform.

The RMA has developed a volunteer package to assist our members with vetting and managing volunteers. Please reach out to your risk advisor for more information.

Pre-Site Inspection and Safety Planning

Having the proper checklist in place for before and during event site inspections will ensure your staff can identify and rectify any potential hazards. Inspect all open areas to the public/attendees and spaces reserved for your staff and vendors. Inspect pathways, seating areas, grandstands, parking spaces, sidewalks, and stairways to be free from obstructions and impediments. Key areas of site inspections are the potential risk of tripping hazards, electrical and fire hazards.

Properly document all potential hazards found and act promptly to eliminate/reduce them. Posting warning signs in clear view or closing off these areas until these hazards are repaired.

In case of an incident, respond appropriately to assist the affected staff or attendees. Report all incidents to the appropriate staff. Maintain proper reporting of the incident and take photographs as needed to document the event.

Please contact your RMA Insurance Risk Advisor for checklists and incident report forms.

Crowd Management

Management of the crowd is important, especially for events that have capacity limit and large public gathering of live events, such as music, parades, rodeo, etc. Risk management of crowds includes posting clear signage, barricades for flow of traffic, and sharing rules for all participants to access and easily understand. Ensure clear communication and cooperation with your local law enforcement to monitor and intervene when needed. Having a plan in place with steps to undertake to deescalate or disperse any unruly crowd will help your staff for such incidents.

Parking Management & Signage

Ensure that that your event has adequate parking space available to all attendees, including attendees that require handicap designated stalls. Have proper readable signage to direct flow of foot traffic and vehicle traffic of where to enter/exit and don't forget to designate parking lanes for emergency vehicles in the event they are called upon, along with an emergency exit plan for vehicles. Place signage to direct the attendees to garbage bins, recycling bins, washroom facilities, and main information tent/centre. Be sure to follow all Alberta Highway Traffic Safety regulations where roadways are used for parking.

Food/Liquor Vendors Licensed, Insurance

Follow up and obtain from your vendors they are [properly licensed with AHS](#) (Alberta Health Services) regarding food handling safe practices and/or [AGLC](#) (Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis) for their liquor serving operations. Also, get a copy of COI (Certificate of Insurance) from your vendors with an endorsement naming your organization and the municipality the event is taking place in as additional insureds. Vendors can also purchase special event insurance through IRC (Instant Risk Coverage). Please contact your Member Service Representative for more information on the IRC Special Event insurance.

Fire extinguishers should be available where vendors are using open flame/propane apparatus within the operations. Always maintain a source of water nearby to assist in putting out fires. Please consult with your local Fire Chief regarding any active Fire Ban within your area of event.

Petting Zoos

Alberta Health Services has [strict requirements for cleanliness](#) at petting zoos. It is recommended that the owner of the animals provide proof of liability insurance and proof of insurance for the animals. Children should always be supervised while interacting with animals, and no dangerous, aggressive, or venomous animals are permitted. Animals should only be fed with permission from the owner, using approved food.

Parades

Parades are a wonderful way to bring the community together, but there are many risks which should not be ignored. Carefully planning the parade route is essential; avoid overpasses, construction areas, and set up blockades to ensure spectators and parade participants are kept safe. Ensure the route does not obstruct emergency service routes and always check with Alberta Traffic and the municipality to ensure the route is permissible on their roads. Do not allow other traffic to impede the parade route.

Find secure locations for judging platforms, first aid, emergency towing vehicles, ambulances, grandstands and viewing areas.

Also, consider establishing guidelines on what can be given to spectators regarding prizes or candy. Never throw items from floats, it is safest to have people walking to hand food to onlookers.

Adequate supervision should be available if there are large groups of children (ex. boy/girl scouts) participating in the parade. Ensure all operators have experience and are qualified to operate vehicles and equipment in the parade. Operation of any equipment and automobiles under the influence of alcohol and other intoxicating substances is illegal and prohibited.

By law, all automobiles being operated on the road must carry liability insurance, obtain certificates of insurance from all vehicles participating in the parade. Ensure that the operators have the qualifications and experience to operate the equipment and vehicles.

Any animals participating should be calm, supervised, and well trained. Avoid startling animals by keeping them separated from loud noises such as sirens, horns, bands, and loud exhaust. Have sanitation crews promptly clean up after the animals.

Inflatables & Tent Structures

Follow all manufacture's guidelines on the installation of inflatables, tents, and temporary structures. Daily routine checks on the structures to confirm that they are properly secured and there is no risk of movement due to severity of weather conditions. Properly mark all ground pegs, spikes, tie downs to prevent tripping hazards to your attendees. Always monitor to keep up to date on the weather conditions during your event. Ensure the vendor(s) have proper insurance for their structures. Never leave an inflatable amusement device unattended. For more information on inflatable amusement devices, please reach out to your Risk Advisor.

Debris Disposal & Washroom Facilities

Always have in place enough garbage and recycling bins in relation to the size of your event. Have washroom facilities to ensure all attendees have access to them. Designate a person or team to routinely clean up and stock up on supplies regularly during the event. When placing the bins and washroom facilities, place them for ease of access and away from tripping hazards. Maintain the practice of keeping a log of when washroom facilities are cleaned, supplies restocked, and by whom.

Be Prepared for an Emergency Shut Down

Lastly, be prepared and ready to act in the unlikely event that your event is required to be shut down promptly for safety or security reasons. It's critical that you are prepared in advance for emergencies that require an orderly evacuation or closure of your event, such as sudden unexpected severe weather or a security matter. Review your emergency planning process before the event to ensure all event staff are trained and aware of the protocols and whom to contact.

For more information visit: RMAinsurance.com

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